

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 02258 151752Z
ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PE
SUBJECT: BELAUNDE BARBS REGIME

1. FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE, WHO RETURNED TO LIMA ON MARCH 9 IN ORDER TO DIRECT ACCION POPULAR'S CAMPAGIN FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, HAS MADE DECLARATIONS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE GOP'S PLANS TO RESTRICT THE AUTHORITY OF THE ASSEMBLY AND HAS CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT EFFORTS TO GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM US, EUROPEAN AND JANAPNESE BANKS. THE GOP-CONTROLLED PRESS HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY SENSITIVE TO BELAUNDE'S REMARKS.

2. IN A PUBLISHED DECLARATION DATED MARCH 10, BELAUNDE CALLED ON THE MILGOV TO PLEDGE THAT ONCE THE ASSEMBLY IS CONVENED THE ARMED FORCES WILL RECOGNIZE AND PRESPECT "THE FULLNESS OF THE POWER WHICH THE PEOPLE HAVE CONFERRED ON IT" THROUGH AN AUTHENTIC ELECTORAL PROCESS, SO THAT ON JULY 28, 1978, WHEN THE ASSEMBLY IS INSTALLED "WE WOULD PASS FROM A DE FACTO REGIME TO A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT." BELAUNDE UNEQUIVOCALLY STATES THAT ONLY UNDER THIS CONDITION WILL HE HEAD AP'S LIST OF CANDIDATES TO THE ASSEMBLY.

3. IN AN AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE 9TH, BELAUNDE
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EXPRESSED DOUBTS OVER THE TRUE AMOUNT OF PERU'S FOREIGN DEBT AND DESCRIBED THE RECENT GOP FINANCIAL MISSIONS ABROAD AS "SUPPLICANT MISSIONS."

4. "EL COMERCIO" OF MARCH 12 TOOK EXCEPTION TO THE EX-PRESIDENT'S DECLARATIONS, CHARACTERIZING THE AIRPORT REMARK AS WILLFULLY OFFENSIVE. AN EDITORIAL PAGE CARTOON SHOWS BELAUNDE MARCHING

PAST THE NATIONAL AALACE, FACING BACKWARDS WHILE SHOUTING
"FORWARD". THE CAPTAIN READS, "HISTORY SOMETIMES SHOWS
DOUBLE FEATURES, THE FIRST A DRAMA, THE SECOND A ONE-ACT FARCE."

5. COMMENT: BELAUNDE OF COURSE HAS AMPLE REASON TO BE
RESENTFUL OF THE MILITARY POWER STRUCTURE THAT OUTSTED HIM
IN 1968. HIS PUBLISHED DECLARATION ABOUT THE ASSEMBLY IS
REMINISCENT OF AP'S EARLY POSITION, BEFORE IT DECIDED TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE JUNE 4 ELECTIONS. BELAUNDE COULD BE TRYING
TO PROVIDE HIMSELF WITH AN "OUT" SHOULD HE DECIDE NOT TO HEAD
AP'S LIST IN ORDER TO AVOID A POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING
POPULARITY CONTEST WITH POPULAR CHRISTIAN PARTY LEADER LUIS
BEDOYA REYES. IN THE LIKELY EVENT THAT THE GOP REFUSES TO
ACCEPT BELAUNDE'S CONDITIONS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE
ASSEMBLY INTO A PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND
SHOULD HE STAND FIRM BY HIS DECISION NOT TO HEAD AP'S LIST,
HE WILL THEN FIND HIMSELF IN A VERY DIFFICULT AND UNCOMFORTABLE
POSITION WITH HIS PARTY, WHICH DESPERATELY NEEDS HIS NAME AT
THE TOP OF ITS LIST TO ATTRACT VOTES.

SHLAUDEMAM

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